

East Hartford Mailroom and Breakers Cafe Notice of Opportunity

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is currently accepting applications from DDS qualified providers to continue the provision of Group Supported Employment supports for General Workers who provide mailroom and café functions in the north region office building located at 255 Pitkin St., East Hartford CT. The awarded agency will:

East Hartford Mailroom

- Provide individual GSE supports to 3-4 General Workers (shared tasks with Breakers Cafe) based on their specific employment needs as they relate to the overall operation of duties relevant to running the mailroom.
- Assess skill compatibility of individuals within placement.
- Identify and develop natural supports.
- Assist with adaptation of materials (tools and equipment) to maintain/enhance individual's abilities.
- Participate in person centered planning such as: IP, transitional meetings, and future employment planning.
- Job development for outplacement into related, competitive employment in the community

Program Description:

East Hartford Mailroom & Copy Center: currently located on the 3rd floor of the DDS North Region building located at 155 Founders Plaza, 255 Pitkin St East Hartford CT. The mailroom provides GSE supports for 2-4 workers with ID/DD who receive DDS supports and are state employees with the title General Workers. The General Workers earn wages in compliance with DOL wage standards and their wages are funded by DDS. The East Hartford Mailroom & Copy Center staff provides mail and copy services to over 200 DDS employees within the building and prepares mail and copy center packets for several external DDS offices. The Mailroom & Copy Center is currently staffed Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 2:30 pm however those hours may be slightly altered. Services may include, but are not limited to: *mail prep including stuffing, stamping and delivery throughout building, preparing mail for pick up to external recipients, completing copy orders, creating packets and documents as needed, utilizing and overseeing maintenance of mailroom equipment and general customer service duties.* It is important that the successful provider be able to demonstrate knowledge in the function of a mailroom, to continue the provision of services currently in place and enhance services as appropriate.

1x funding may be available to the awarded provider for the provision of Assistive Technology devices enhancing the use of mailroom equipment by General Workers and should be stated in the application proposal. Such enhancements may also benefit all staff from a universal design perspective. Consideration will be given to applications containing provisions for workers to transition to competitive employment in the community.

Breakers Café:

- Provide individual supports to 3-4 General Workers (shared tasks with mailroom & copy center) based on their specific needs as they relate to employment as well as overall operation of the duties relevant to providing food service options in the Breakers Cafe
- Assess skill compatibility of individuals within placement.
- Identify and develop natural supports.
- Assist with adaptation of materials (tools and equipment) to maintain/enhance individual's ability.
- Participate in person centered planning such as: IP, transitional meetings and future planning.
- Job development for outplacement into related, competitive employment in the community

Breakers Café: currently located on the 2nd floor of the DDS North Region building located at 155 Founders Plaza, 255 Pitkin St East Hartford CT. The Breakers Café is currently a break/lunchroom for over 200 DDS employees who work within the building. Focus should be on creating an environment to provide quick food choices for staff while also preparing General Workers with adequate training and skill building related to acquiring/preparing/providing food options.

The Breakers Café has not historically been a self-sustaining business however that is an expectation. Proposals should include a business plan that articulates a long-term vision with the goal of providing reasonable snack and lunch choices for employees. Proposals should also include strategies to provide training & placement for General Workers into competitive employment. Implementation of business plans submitted may be deferred until staffing levels revert to pre-pandemic status.

About the People: There are four General Workers who are currently part of the GSE and have each worked in this placement for 3 years or more. They rotate between the mailroom and café performing required duties. Transportation to and from the East Hartford office is provided and scheduled through their residential supports. Additional information will be shared during an information session noted below.

Successful NOO applicants will demonstrate they

- are, or will become a DDS Qualified provider of Group Supported Employment (GSE) AND Employment Transition Services (ETS)
- are committed to integrated, competitive employment for all individuals
- endorse customized approaches to a myriad array of jobs/job duties
- can develop additional opportunities within the host location as appropriate
- are committed to individuals earning real pay for real work
- have sufficient community & business relationships, encouraging community placement
- will collaborate with other agencies as appropriate
- will access and recommend assistive technology when appropriate
- will promote natural support relationships with host site business employees
- have an understanding of the operational duties relevant to running a mailroom and food service functions as identified in this proposal

Informational Session:

DDS will host an informational session via Teams virtual platform to discuss this Notice of Opportunity. The date is currently scheduled for **Thursday, November 18th, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.**

To register to attend the informational session please respond to martin.zaugg@ct.gov that you would like to attend.

Application process & timeline:

- An FAQ document will be created to answer questions submitted by interested providers. All questions should be submitted to martin.zaugg@ct.gov by **Wednesday November 24th, 2021.**
- The FAQ will be posted to the DDS website in a Frequently Asked Questions document by **Friday December 3rd, 2021.**
- Completed applications must be submitted to Julie.Bouchard@ct.gov by end of day **Friday December 10th, 2021.**
- Awarded applicant should be prepared to start support services onsite no later than **Monday January 31st, 2022.**